1. **The purpose of this policy is**

   The purpose of this policy is to provide the mechanism for respect and recognition of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities within our municipality. This policy will create avenues and develop pathways which connect Council and the local Aboriginal community.

   This recognition policy further affirms Mildura Rural City Council’s commitments within the Indigenous Land Use Agreement dated July 2003 and signed by Mildura Rural City Council and will provide a platform from which such commitments will be fulfilled.

2. **Policy Statement**

   As a proud multicultural municipality, Council will recognise and acknowledge the value and important role the First Australians play in our community.

   Council is committed to positive strategies for creating a harmonious relationship between Council and the local Aboriginal community.

   By working with the local Aboriginal community, ensuring a two way conversation, together we will build a solid foundation on which to open doors between our similarities and differences so that we can foster and build respect through reconciliation.

3. **Principles**

   **Acknowledgement**

   Council will recognise the traditional custodians of the land at statutory Council meetings with an Acknowledgement of Country spoken by the Mayor:

   Acknowledgement of Country:

   “I would like to acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land on which we are meeting, the Latji Latji people, and pay my respects to Elders both past and present.”
Due to the size and extent of the Council, the acknowledgment may be altered to reflect the specific location or country the acknowledgement is spoken.

If holding large or significant events within the municipality, Council will invite a local Elder or family member to perform a Welcome to Country. In the absence of a local Elder or family member, an Acknowledgement of Country can be spoken by the facilitator/chair/MC. The Acknowledgement can be the statement used at Council meetings or a similar statement capturing the same message and meaning.

**Signage**

Council will display symbolic recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders as part of entrance signage to the municipality at major transport connections into the municipality. This process will commence once a Registered Aboriginal Party (RAP) has been confirmed for the Mildura Rural City Council Local Government Area (MRCC LGA).

The agreed process, endorsed by Council’s Aboriginal Action Committee will include:

- Sourcing funding for signage
- Engagement with key stakeholders – Registered Aboriginal Party (RAP) for region, Traditional Owners, VicRoads, Native Title Unit, Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport & Resources, Aboriginal Action Committee and Mildura Rural City Council
- Location and design to be determined as per VicRoads Welcome to Country Signage Guidelines
- Approval from Native Title Unit for signage
- A plan developed for ongoing maintenance and repairs
- Installation of signage.

**Significant Dates & Events – celebrate, support and acknowledge**

Council recognises the significant dates and celebrations in relation to Aboriginal history and culture and commits to acknowledge, celebrate and support along with the local Aboriginal Community the following dates:

- NAIDOC Week
- Reconciliation Week
- Sorry Day
- Survival Day
- Mabo Day
- National Aboriginal and Islander Children’s Day

**Cultural Safety**

Council will recognise the importance of cultural safety and provide a welcoming environment for Aboriginal Community members within Council’s contact points, service centres, offices and buildings. Council’s contact points for customers and community members will engage with and represent the diversity within our community, particularly Aboriginal Culture through artwork and imagery.

**Partnerships**
Council commits to working in partnership with the local Aboriginal community through the Aboriginal Action Committee for the purpose of improving and enhancing the wellbeing of the Aboriginal community in the Mildura Rural City Council municipality.

**Engagement and consultation**

Council will undertake active and appropriate engagement and consultation with the local Aboriginal community on any council action that impacts the Aboriginal community which includes but is not limited to Council planning, projects and strategies.

**Flags**

Council will continue to fly both the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags along with the Australian and Council flag wherever these are flown or displayed as part of Council events, facilities and assets.

**Culture**

Council recognises the significance and diversity of culture within the local Aboriginal community and is committed to continual learning and better understanding the attributes and variables that impact on Aboriginal communities and culture today. In order to best serve and represent our diverse municipality we must understand one another.

**Who is responsible for implementing this policy?**

Councillors, Chief Executive Officer, General Managers, Managers, Team Leaders and staff will be responsible for the implementation of this policy.

**Definitions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Aboriginal Action Committee</strong></td>
<td>Council’s Aboriginal Action Committee (AAC) was established in 2011. AAC members represent a range of community organisations and networks as well as Elders, community members and is facilitated by Council staff.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Indigenous Land Use Agreement</strong></td>
<td>An indigenous land use agreement (ILUA) is an agreement between a native title group and others about the use and management of land and waters.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Custodians</strong></td>
<td>A Custodian is someone who cares/d for and valued something. A custodian is a caretaker.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Respect</strong></td>
<td>Respect is about acknowledging the sense of worth and value of something or someone such as: the individual, culture or diversity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Protocols</strong></td>
<td>Protocols are an understood and accepted behaviour. There are distinct differences between bureaucratic protocols and cultural protocols.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mildura Rural City Council has an ILUA with the Latji Latji and Wergaia Peoples in relation to the Three Chain Reserve adjacent to the river, extending from the Marina site down to and including Apex Park.

Please refer to the ILUA document for further definitions.
Reconciliation is about acceptance, respect and understanding of one another.

Recognition is the confirmation and acknowledgment of the existence of something or the action of someone.

Registered Aboriginal Party (RAP) are organisations that hold decision-making responsibilities under the Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006 for protecting Aboriginal cultural heritage in a specified geographical area.

A RAP is a strategic document that supports an organisation’s business plan. It includes practical actions that will drive an organisation’s contribution to reconciliation both internally and in the communities in which it operates.

A partnership is a working commitment to common goals.

Cultural Safety is about a physical and visual acknowledgement of culture present in an environment.

Cultural safety is present in an environment that is:
‘... spiritually, socially and emotionally safe, as well as physically safe for people, where there is no assault, challenge or denial of their identity, of who they are and what they need. It is about shared respect, shared meaning, shared knowledge and experience of learning together.’ (Williams, 1999: 213)

To acknowledge something or someone is to recognise and accept.

An Aboriginal Elder is a person who is respected and recognised by their community as being a person who guides the community through leadership. Being recognised as an Elder is not based on a person’s age.

A Welcome to Country is a ceremony performed by Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people to welcome visitors to their traditional land. (Reconciliation Victoria)

Unlike a Welcome to Country, an Acknowledgement of Country can be performed by a non-Indigenous person. It is a way of showing awareness of and respect for the traditional Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander custodians of the land on which a meeting or event is being held. (Reconciliation Victoria)

A significant event is a notable occurrence, which showcases Mildura Rural City Council, Councillors, staff and community such as festivals, official openings and launches. (Reconciliation Victoria)

National Aborigines and Islanders Day Observance Committee.
NAIDOC is a celebration of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and an opportunity to recognise the contributions of Indigenous Australians in various fields. NAIDOC is celebrated in the first week of July every year.

National Reconciliation Week (NRW) is celebrated across Australia each year between 27 May and 3 June. The dates commemorate two significant milestones in the reconciliation journey—the anniversaries of the successful 1967 referendum and the High Court Mabo decision.

National Sorry Day is an Australia-wide observance held on May 26 each year. This day gives people the chance to come together and share the steps towards healing for the Stolen Generations, their families and communities.

Stolen generations refer to Indigenous Australians who
were forcibly removed from their families and communities.

Survival Day
26 January – also known as Australia Day. Survival Day celebrates the survival of Aboriginal culture in the 21st Century.

Mabo Day
Mabo Day occurs annually on 3 June. It commemorates Eddie Koiki Mabo, a Torres Strait Islander whose campaign for Indigenous land rights led to a landmark High Court decision on 3 June 1992 which overturned the legal fiction of Terra Nullius.

National Aboriginal and Islander Children’s Day
National Aboriginal and Islander Children’s Day is celebrated on 4 August each year.

6. Legislation and other references

6.1 Legislation

Not applicable

6.2 Documents

This Policy is implemented in conjunction with the following documents:

- Mildura Rural City Council Social Inclusion Policy CP019
- Mildura Rural City Council Human Rights Policy CP006
- Mildura Rural City Council Flying of Flags at Council Sites Policy OP178
- Mildura Rural City Council Community Engagement Policy CP020
- Mildura Rural City Council Reconciliation Action Plan 2017-2020
- Victorian Local Aboriginal Network Five Year Plan 2016-2020
- Victorian Indigenous Affairs Framework 2013-2018
- National Indigenous Reform Agreement (Closing the Gap)
- Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities 2008
- United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples
- VicRoads Welcome to Country Signage Guidelines 2009

6.3 Risk Assessment Reference

Please tick the corporate risk(s) that this policy is addressing.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Risk Category</th>
<th>✓ Risk Category</th>
<th>✓</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>Financial Sustainability</td>
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<tr>
<td>Committees</td>
<td>Human Resource Management</td>
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<tr>
<td>Compliance – Legal &amp; Regulatory</td>
<td>Leadership &amp; Organisational Culture</td>
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<td>Contract Management</td>
<td>Occupational Health &amp; Safety</td>
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<tr>
<td>Contract Tendering &amp; Procurement</td>
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<tr>
<td>Environmental Sustainability</td>
<td>Public Image and Reputation</td>
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